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E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [TU](#)  
SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT  
FRIDAY, JANUARY 9, 2009

In Today's Papers

Ergenekon Detentions Strike AKP Opponents (Cumhuriyet)  
Media outlets report that on Thursday, Ankara witnessed a heavy flow of meetings between military and political leaders as well as among members of the judiciary following Wednesday's detentions in the Ergenekon investigation. The detention of retired generals Tuncer Kilinc and Kemal Yavuz and the former head of the Higher Education Board (YOK) Kemal Guruz, combined with the search in the house of the Court of Appeals former chief prosecutor Sabih Kanadoglu stoked tensions in Ankara, say papers. In "Emergency Summit over Latest Ergenekon Detentions," mainstream Sabah reports the Turkish General Staff (TGS) chief General Ilker Basbug held meetings with Prime Minister Erdogan and President Gul while retired generals were interrogated in Ankara. Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak says General Basbug demanded from Erdogan and Gul that retired generals taken into custody should be "treated politely" and that instead of detentions, the retired generals should have been invited to the prosecutor's office to answer questions. Basbug also said Hursit Tolon and Sener Eruygur, retired generals who were detained last year in earlier phases of the Ergenekon investigation, should also be released. The Court of Appeals (Yargitay) held a meeting, but released no statement. Later in the day, Erdogan held meetings with the Interior and Justice Ministers.

While the Court of Appeals meeting was taking place, Government Spokesman Cemil Cicek, in an interview with Islamist-oriented news channel 24, warned the judges that a statement to be issued at the end of their meeting would amount to "statement of opinion" which would influence the process. Vatan claims following Cicek's warning, the high court justices decided to not release a statement.

Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet says that in the meeting, the high court members said action should be taken against Ergenekon prosecutor Zekeriya Oz for using illegal wiretapping methods to gather evidence.

Vatan lists the accusations directed against the prominent names taken into custody Wednesday: The former head of YOK, Kemal Guruz, together with former Istanbul University President Kemal Alemdaroglu, was allegedly in charge of Ergenekon activities in

universities. Eleven Ergenekon suspects detained in the city of Sivas were said to be plotting assassinations of prominent intellectuals and politicians. Former Istanbul Mayor Bedrettin Dalan, believed by some to be Ergenekon's "Number 1," was allegedly in charge of generating public support for Ergenekon. Mainstream Hurriyet says the warrant for searching the house of former chief prosecutor Sabih Kanadoglu contained "incredible accusations" such as linking Kanadoglu to the bomb attacks on Cumhuriyet newspaper offices in Istanbul and the armed attack on the Council of State (Danistay) in 2006. The warrant places Kanadoglu among the members of an organization which was plotting the assassinations of the Prime Minister and renowned journalists, says Hurriyet. Cumhuriyet says all those detained Wednesday were the opponents of the ruling AKP, and were believed to be implicated in the February 28 process.

Papers also report Turkey's elite business group TUSIAD called for calm after Turkish shares fell more than 5 percent, and the lira weakened.

#### Editorial Commentary on Latest Ergenekon Detentions

Ertugrul Ozkok wrote in mainstream Hurriyet: "Neither the military nor the Yargitay made statements to the public even though there was a certain uneasiness regarding the ongoing Ergenekon investigation. This is a very good step toward a democratic culture."

Fikret Bila wrote in mainstream Milliyet: "General Basbug acted very responsibly by having meetings with Gul and Erdogan, and did the right thing by not trying to aggravate public tension via TGS

ANKARA 00000035 002 OF 003

statements."

Bilal Cetin wrote in mainstream Vatan: "Undeniably the recent arrests created high tension in the military high ranks which resulted in General Basbug's meetings with the president and the prime minister. However all of this tension did not lead to a statement from the military which is very good thing for democracy."

Fehmi Kuru wrote in Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak: "Both military and opposition leaders are overreacting to the recent arrests and the ongoing case. It is the government who should be concerned because it does not have any control over the judicial process."

Nazli Ilıcak wrote in mainstream Sabah: "Although the military did not issue a statement yet the intensity of General Basbug's meeting traffic was an intervention in the process, which wounds democracy."

#### Rockets From Lebanon Raise Second Front Fears

Media outlets report on fears which were heightened on Thursday when rockets were fired from Lebanon into Israel, raising the specter of a second front opening alongside the confrontation with Hamas in Gaza. Mainstream Hurriyet reports, "the rockets are thought to have been fired by a small Palestinian group in Lebanon, not by Hezbollah." Mainstream Sabah notes, "The United Nations will suspend relief deliveries to the beleaguered Gaza Strip after Israeli soldiers opened fire on a truck that was attempting to deliver aid, killing one UN-contracted truck driver." Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports, "Israel bombed UN's aid convoy just after silencing the weapons for three hours." Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak notes, "The UN Security Council has called a special session to discuss the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip."

In a related story, mainstream Milliyet reports on a Ha'aretz story in, "Livni Told Not to Come to Turkey," and repeats the Israeli story's allegations that "Ankara rejected an offer from Israeli Foreign Minister Livni several days ago to visit the Turkish capital. The official response was, 'If she doesn't want to talk about a cease-fire, she shouldn't come.'"

#### EU's Solana Comes to Turkey for Ceasefire in Gaza

Mainstream Sabah reports that the European Union's foreign policy

chief, Javier Solana, yesterday praised Turkey's efforts to forge a truce in Gaza, calling these efforts "very constructive." Solana arrived in Ankara late Wednesday for talks on the Gaza conflict and the situation in the region amid deepening concerns over further expansion of the conflict. At a press conference, Solana said that all efforts have been focused on reaching a cease-fire and opening crossings for transportation of humanitarian assistance to the Gaza people, Solana said, noting that the EU and Turkey were of the same opinion on this issue. While thanking Turkish leaders for their efforts, Solana also said the EU is willing to send monitors, who were once on Gaza's border with Egypt, to work at the crossing after a cease-fire in Gaza is achieved.

Kemal Dervis Leaves his Post Early at the UNDP

Milliyet, Vatan, Hurriyet, Radikal: Today's papers report that United Nations Development Program Administrator Kemal Dervis said he would quit his post on March 1 instead of July 31. Responding to a question whether he would be a candidate for the Istanbul Metropolis Mayorship from CHP, Dervis said "I did not resign to be involved in politics. My duties at the UN would end next summer. I could ask for a four year extension but for family reasons I decided to quit now and become engaged in academic work on global and Turkish economics."

TV News (CNN Turk)

ANKARA 00000035 003 OF 003

Domestic

- AKP MP Egemen Bagis has been named chief EU negotiator, a post currently held by Foreign Minister Ali Babacan. Bagis has also been given the post of State Minister in the cabinet.
- IMF delegation starts formal talks in Turkey. A stand-by agreement is expected in March.
- The prosecutor has launched an investigation against Diyarbakir mayor Osman Baydemir who said those who recognize the culture and language of the Kurdish people will have to accept also the name of their lands.

World

- A Greek Cypriot parliamentary committee has approved a 115 million Euro tank deal with Russia.
- Russia and Ukraine have agreed to restart pumping Russian gas through Ukrainian pipelines to EU countries.
- The US Navy will launch a force to combat piracy in the waters off Somalia.

JEFFREY